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ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS OF ALBANIA

Abstract

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New local administrative divisions, details on which have just been made available though the receipt of the Albanian Official Gazette, were set up in Albania in July 1953 in conjunction with a general reorganization of the national government. This move followed the pattern set in the USSR and some other European satellites after Stalin's death. The administrative reorganization, the third since the Albanian Communists assumed control in 1944, was intended to give the central government more direct control over the local units. Elections for the new local bodies were held in March and April of this year.

I. REORGANIZATION OF JULY 1953

A Party-government decree of July 1953 called for reorganization of the administrative divisions of the country in order "to create the possibilities for a more operational direction" of the local authorities by the central government through decentralization of some functions of the latter.

To implement this decision, the People's Assembly on August 1, 1953 approved Law No. 1707 amending Article 71 of the Constitution and designating the People's Councils (*Keshilla Popullore*) as the organs of state power in villages, localities, cities, districts, and regions. These Councils were to be elected by popular vote for a term of three years. The law also authorized the Presidium of the Assembly to disband the People's Councils of localities, cities, and districts existing under the old administrative set-up and to appoint provisional executive committees for the newly created regions. These committees were to exercise the functions of the People's Councils until new elections were held.

by the Division of Research for USSR and Eastern Europe

63/ On the basis of the amended Article 71 of the Constitution the Presidium of the Assembly on August 20 issued Decree No. 1718 stating that the People's Republic of Albania is divided into regions (rajes), districts (rrethet), cities (qytetet), localities (lokalitete), and villages (fshatrat). The decree listed 10 regions, 25 districts, 4 cities with the rank of districts, 47 localities, 9 cities with the rank of locality, 2,809 villages, 11 cities with the rank of village, and 48 city wards with the rank of villages. (See summary table listing various categories.)

The 4 cities with the rank of districts are Durres, Korça, Shkoder, and Tirana; the 9 cities with the rank of locality are Berat, Lezha, Stalin Town, Kavaje, Elbasan, Gjirokastra, Fier, Vlora, and Fier; the 11 cities with the rank of village are Peshkopi, Shijak, Pogradec, Fier, Delvine, Sarande, Tepelene, Bilisht, Kukes, Lezha (Lozh), and Kruje.¹

II. BACKGROUND ON ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION

The reorganization of the administrative divisions of 1955 was the third such measure taken by the Tirana Communist regime since the end of the war. The first measure was taken on November 8, 1947, when Law No. 846 was adopted, providing for the formation of administrative divisions of the country on the Soviet pattern. On the basis of that law, there were created 20 city, 573 locality, and 2,801 village People's Councils (Soviets).

The second reorganization occurred on March 11, 1948, when the People's Assembly passed Law No. 886 on the basis of which 25 districts, one city (Tirana), 186 localities, and 2,807 villages were created.²

The latest reorganization was taken in conjunction with the contraction and centralization of the national government, which in turn followed similar steps taken after Stalin's death in the USSR and in some of the other European satellites. Although the official announcement in Albania claimed that the reorganization of the local

1. Law No. 1707 and Decree No. 1718 were published in Gazeta Zyrtare (Official Gazette), No. 14 of September 17, 1955. The decree contains a complete list of regions, districts, cities, localities, villages and city wards with the rank of village.
2. For further details, cf. DHS-15-222-62, New Administrative Divisions in Albania, June 8, 1948, OFFICIAL USE ONLY.

631 governmental units was intended to decentralize some of the functions of the national government and grant more competences to the local authorities, in reality the aim was for more direct ("operational") control of the local government by Tirana. This was indicated by the reduction in the number of highest local government bodies from 28 districts and one city to 10 regions. Local elections for the new administrative divisions were held in March and April 1954.

State-7D, Wash., D.C.

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SUMMARY TABLE OF ALBANIAN REGIONS, DISTRICTS, LOCALITIES, AND VILLAGES

(Based on 1953 Administrative Reorganization)

<u>Regions</u> <u>(Qarqe)</u>	<u>Districts</u> <u>(Rrethe)</u>	<u>Cities with</u> <u>rank of</u> <u>districts</u>	<u>Localities</u> <u>(Lokalitete)</u>	<u>Cities with</u> <u>rank of</u> <u>locality</u>	<u>Villages</u> <u>(Fshatra)</u>	<u>Cities with</u> <u>rank of</u> <u>village</u>	<u>City wards</u> <u>with rank</u> <u>of village</u>
Berat	5	—	3	3	370	—	5 + 2 = 7 ^a
Diber	5	—	3	—	228	1	
Durres	3	1	2	1	135	1	6 + 3 = 9 ^b
Elbasan	5	—	3	1	296	1	4
Gjirokaster	6	—	6	1	397	4	5
Korce	8	1	6	1	368	1	5
Kukes	3	—	5	—	154	1	
Shkoder	8	1	6	—	313	1	7
Tirane	5	1	11	—	210	1	
Vlore	5	—	2	2	218	—	7 + 4 = 11 ^c
	<u>53</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>2609</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>48</u>

- a. 5 wards for the city of Berat and 2 for the city of Inhamje.
 b. 6 wards for the city of Durres and 3 for the city of Kavaje.
 c. 7 wards for the city of Vlore and 4 for the city of Pler.

II: U. S.

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(no date) 1934

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